

Working Better:

Notes on Increasing the Velocity of Knowledge

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The Role of Work in Carrying out our Mission

RF's mission is to help real estate enterprises run better and to help them run their real estate better. We don't raise capital, we don't broker properties, we don't value real estate assets -- we work to help an enterprise answer essential questions: is it doing the right work, does it have the right resources doing that work, are they doing it in the right way, do they have effective tools to execute and is the enterprise getting the right information to measure and manage its work. And we work to help them get better based on those answers. In order to continue to succeed in our mission we have to continue to drive ourselves to work better -- specifically in the direction of change in our markets.

Our clients are working over widening geographies, they are working faster, they are getting flatter. Our work habits, tools and our whole ecosystem has to adapt to these market changes.

We have to work better over distance, we have to work more openly and collaboratively, and we have to activate more knowledge than any one of us has in our 'head'. We have to not be a collection of individual experts but a network of practitioners who both know things but also know how to get knowledge that they don't already know and bring it to bear just in time to make our clients better.

Broader, societal changes in the nature of how, where and why we work and the emergence of digital work ecosystems in response to those seismic shifts present us with tremendous opportunities. It is central to our enterprise strategy to push ourselves to work more collaboratively, work better over distance and increase our access to and activation of knowledge in getting results.

It is central to our strategy to get knowledge out of individual heads and into artifacts that are accessible and useable by more of our practitioners.

It is central to our strategy to get each and every one of our practitioners to understand that the goal isn't just to 'know things' but to also to 'know how to know things'. It is central to our strategy to not just amass experts, but to amass a growing body of knowledge and the expertise to get it, use and add to it at a velocity that matches the demands of our clients.

The Vectors of Improvement

We need to be the best firm in our world at working over distance -- because our clients are not all in one place, because we need to spend more of our hours working towards an outcome rather than traveling to a place of work in order to START working.

We need to be the best firm in our world at collaborating -- with each other, with clients and with other vital stakeholders -- because knowledge is expanding at a faster pace than any one of us alone can keep up with.

We need to be the best firm in our world in creating knowledge WHILE we work, not just as a result of our work. We need to be the best firm in our world at getting knowledge OUT of heads and into artifacts that can be accessed, used and improved by our whole network.

to this multi-faceted challenge. Taken together they are useful signposts and banners that help us understand where we need to go and how we need to get there. Work Out Loud, Work Over Distance, Work Like a Network and Know What We Know. We're going to take a look at each and see how they each describe a set of important aspects of the challenge and also how they overlap and work together.

Work Out Loud

Work Out Loud refers to a material change in HOW we work.

WOL is based on a fundamental belief that sharing not just the results of our work but the process we use to get a result has real value -- that if we 'show our work' WHILE we're doing it others will learn faster, knowledge will move faster, and we'll get better results.

Work Out Loud is based on a 'pay it forward' principle -- that we need to not only accomplish the 'task at hand' but WHILE doing that get better and get others better at doing tasks like these in the future.

Work Over Distance

Our clients themselves are changing how and where they work. Almost gone are the days when all the client personnel that we need to interact with are in one place.

To collaborate, share and get near- and long-term results we need to get better and better at meeting people where they are, at engaging with them even if we're not in the same room. We also need to keep improving the ratio of effective hours to worked hours.

One important way to do that is to get real work done in lots of places -- wherever we are. Another is to spend more time solving problems and less time traveling to a place before we can solve problems!

Work Like a Network

Driven by the opportunities of new geographical and product frontiers our clients have gotten more spread out, more decentralized. This, coupled with broader societal changes away from hierarchy, need-to-know and command-and-control structures towards flatter, project/team structures create a set of new challenges. We hear more CEOs saying something like "it's great, we've hired some great people sent them to conquer a new market...but now I don't really know what they're doing and, even more importantly, I sense that they KNOW a bunch of stuff that others in my enterprise could use but I don't know how to make THAT happen." working in a network rather than a silo/hierarchy can help solve BOTH of those problems. If more people are working and sharing not just inside a defined hierarchy and only to people they know and people they think should know, the better chance to see what people are doing and the better chance that others can learn from and use the knowledge of that work. Working in a network doesn't mean that one doesn't have a 'boss' but rather that the role of the 'boss' changes significantly.

The individual is no longer only responsible to the boss but also to others in the network -- one has a responsibility to share one's knowledge broadly (because the individual can't really know everyone who might need it). The individual also has new opportunities to be recognized by the network -- not just the boss -- and to advance based on that broader recognition.

Know What We Know

Quite often that same CEO conversation referred to above goes on to a wistful, frustrated "in fact, if we [the enterprise] only knew what we [the individuals inside the enterprise] know we would make better decisions, we could react to the market faster -- we could make more money!" At RF we set ourselves this explicit challenge starting in 2011/12 -- How do we accelerate the accumulation of our 'knowledge' OUTSIDE of individual practitioners' heads. We recognized that while we had ways of sharing knowledge -- a collection of past documents that could be mined for good ideas and examples, a culture in which practitioners were happy to answer questions, share what they know about a specific topic/issue -- these by themselves weren't fast enough or broad enough to meet the challenges of a changing market. We not only needed to keep storing documents and keep answering questions and talking to each other, but we also needed to find ways to accumulate knowledge WHILE we are working.

We needed to increase the amount of knowledge that existed outside of individual heads in places and objects accessible to the many not just the few.

We've made progress. That's why an increasing number of our clients are saying 'You work better than we do. Help us work like you do.' Leading is MUCH better than following. But we've still go a long way to go and need to accelerate not let up.

Our Long History of Actually Working Out Loud and Working Like a Network

We actually have a lot of experience with 'working out loud' and have been doing it for years -- in a project team room. We tend to work in team rooms so people can hear each other, so sharing an idea or issue can happen very fast, so we have more eyes on any problem and increase our chance to solve a problem quickly, putting stickies on the wall of the team room, leaving white board sketches, handwriting an agenda or

high-level plan are all forms of 'working out loud'! Collaborative work sessions -- which we've been doing for decades -- are not command-and-control, are not divide-and-conquer task management ways of working. They are working laterally, without regard to stature or seniority, 'working like a network'. They are also all about working 'out loud' -- everything stays up on the wall, warts and all! Collaborative work sessions show us over and over again that engaging with work IN PROCESS -- rather than waiting for a finished 'product' can not only be faster but can also be deeper and richer and get us to a better answer. Because there is a lot of KNOWLEDGE in the formulation and drafting and iteration process that often gets left out of a finished product.

We've also been sharing throughout our enterprise history 'what we know' so others can know more than they did. We've been steadily increasing our storehouse of at least that subset of knowledge that makes its way into formal documents for nearly 20 years. We've been striving so that each practitioner can 'know more than they knew' since we started.

All of that is good. All that means we are well positioned as an enterprise to seize the opportunity that the digital explosion is presenting. But we have to actually seize it. We have to move from the foundation of those shared-lived, physical experiences and extend them digitally, over distance and across time. We have to figure out how to take that 'magic' that happens in a physical team room and translate it to a digital team room. We have to figure out how to take the freedom and palpable energy that occurs in a collaborative in-person session and extend that digitally, over time and distance.

The superpower of unknowable, amazing connections

Whether you're a company of 150 or 150,000, there's knowledge outside our reach...

*We can't know everyone
who knows what we need.*

*We can't know everyone
who needs what we know.*

It's not about how much we're trying. It's because people are complex, with deep histories and interests. And people keep joining our company, and learning and changing, and having fresh problems and ideas.

That's your knowledge base.

And if you want value out of that knowledge base that's locked away in people's heads... If you want to connect more people who can help with people who need help...Then you need a community where both people and systems are working to make it happen. You need Yammer (AND Teams)."

Melanie Hohertz, Digital Productivity Manager, Cargil

The Challenge at RF Right Now

We now have the ingredients for a whole new level of effectiveness:

- We **already know how** to collaborate, share our knowledge, work openly and out loud when we are physically together in a project team room, in a collaborative work session, in the hallway, in the breakroom
- We **have a clearly articulated** vision about the importance of a better way of working to our enterprise strategy
- And we **finally have a digital ecosystem** designed to support this better way of working

Given that, we only have ourselves to blame if we don't embrace and lean into this.

rf(x) - The 'Logical Knowledge Model' for Working Out Loud in a Network Over Distance in Order to Know What we Know

Some 7 or 8 years ago it began to dawn on us that 'knowledge' resided in more than heads and documents. Facebook, YouTube, TedTalks, LinkedIn, blogs and the proliferation of discussion forums on a dizzying array of hobbies and topics taught us that there's an awful lot of 'knowledge' out there that is not in a 'document' and quite likely will NEVER make its way

into one. So, our library-based (all knowledge is in 'books') notions of digital 'knowledge base' was missing BIG chunks of useful stuff. Knowledge existed in a whole range of videos -- from extemporaneous/lofi to highly scripted/polished ones -- that never got turned into a book/article/paper. Knowledge existed in discussions themselves independent of whether those discussions ever got refined into a how-to or guide. Knowledge existed in daily 'thoughts and notes' (blogs) that never got edited/polished/published in traditional forms.

So, we developed a 'logical knowledge model -- rf(x) -- to account for not only document-based knowledge but also all sorts of other containers types: videos, discussions, chats, tips, tricks, definitions, Q&A, lessons, profiles. rf(x) is not an app or a tool or even a single place but is rather a model or map of all the tools and places where knowledge might find its way and be found.



rf(x) - The 'Physical Knowledge Model' or Where What Stuff Actually is Right Now

As with the distinction between a logical and physical data model -- where the logical is more permanent and enduring and the physical represents a current instance to express and work with the logical and where the

physical might change as available tools and technologies change -- our 'logical knowledge model' represented above is intended to be quite long-lived and unaffected by any improvements or changes to the technologies that might deliver it at a given moment.

At present,

- Our physical model (or digital architecture) direction is to use as much of Office365 as possible
- Not all components are as full realized 'physically' as others
- One component might use multiple technologies/apps to be realized physically

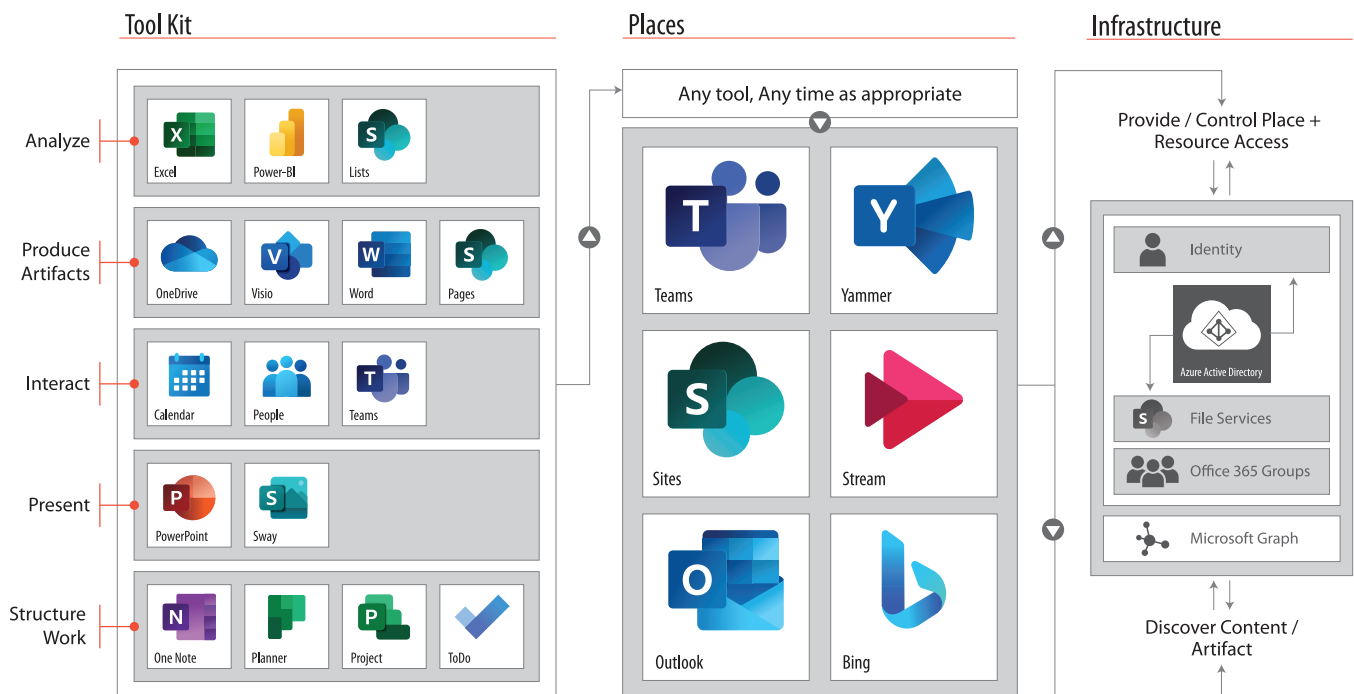
Specifically for example

- **rf(documents)** is a defined set of artifacts from completed projects stored/searchable/harvestable in SharePoint PLUS documents in process on active projects stored in SharePoint (underneath a Team)
- **rf(talks)** is a youtube/tedtalks for RF stored in the

Video Portal (soon to be migrated by Microsoft to Stream)

- **rf(discussions)** is comprised of Yammer discussions about topics of enduring interest at RF PLUS Team conversations regarding shared work towards a shared goal by a defined group of practitioners
- **rf(models)** is comprised of specific Yammer groups dedicated to promulgating and explaining defined RF Models PLUS specific Teams focused on developing new Models to add to our knowledge base
- **rf(elements)** is (not widely adopted/used) PowerApp plus a spotty collection of Glossaries (documents in SharePoint), Yammer Groups dedicated to collating useful numbers relevant to real estate as well as FAQ documents and posts; there is a new physical instance of rf(elements) under development now extending to BOTs (using QnA Maker and the Bot Framework). The go-

M365 Tools, Places and Infrastructure



forward view of rf(elements) is that it will be content primarily accessed across O365 from the various search experiences (rather than an 'app' or single place).

The Relationship of rf(x) to our Overall Work Ecosystem

Of course, not all work is creating/re-using knowledge artifacts. We also call, meet, chat, report every day. So, while rf(x) is highly intertwined with our overall work ecosystem it is not the same thing. Our overall work ecosystem is largely* based on the components of Office365. We describe the components of O365 as being one of three primary types: Tools, Places and Infrastructure. We believe this is quite important to subtle and perhaps subconscious expectation setting and alignment. A 'place' is related to but quite distinct from a 'tool'. We do things -- often a variety of things -- in one place; and we often do the same thing in multiple places from time to time. We read a book in the library but also from time to time in Starbucks, in our basement and even in our offices.

In our view of O365 the primary places are: Teams, Yammer, Stream, SharePoint Communication/Hub Sites and Outlook. These are places in O365 where one spends time, hangs out and does several or even many types of things.

Tools are: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PowerBI, Project, Visio. One picks up a 'tool' in a variety of places in order to do a specific thing.

Using our Work Ecosystem to WOL and rf(x) to KWWK

So, if we as individual practitioners want to know what we [the enterprise] knows, we need to alter our work habits to work more 'out loud' and to interact more widely across the 'network.' So, at a practical level what should we do?

→ Recognize that Teams is the communications, interaction and collaboration center ('hub') of Office 365 - not Outlook, not SharePoint, not

Yammer, not Skype.

- Also recognize that Outlook, SharePoint, Yammer and Skype all have an ongoing and important role to play in the Office365 ecosystem, but none are the center/hub - Teams is.
- Be comforted that all the features and functions of Skype for Business will be added to Teams by the end of 2018 (much is already there but several widely-used Meetings features -- recording, digital whiteboard, native in-meeting app sharing (deeper than screen sharing that is already there) -- will be added by mid-year and nearly all Calling features by end of year).
- Expect, as an individual inside a leading WOL enterprise:
 - To be checking on and engaging in Teams as often as one has checked email in the past;
 - Their email messages to DECREASE as their activity in Teams increases;
 - To be conversing about all project or initiative activities in the appropriate Channel in a Team (not in Outlook);
 - To be learning about or contributing to topics of enduring interest to the enterprise, LOB or practice area in Yammer (not in Outlook);
 - To be sending private or ad hoc messages to one individual (or a few specific individuals) in Chat in Teams (not in Outlook);
 - To hold all video meeting in Teams Meetings (including meetings that have some participants dialing in or a mobile or plain old telephone).
 - To go to SharePoint as a Place (app) for three primary reasons
 - To search for artifacts that aren't naturally proximate to an active Team, Yammer Group or Outlook message or Group -- that is, historical/legacy artifacts [in RF's case the 'kBank' documents] no longer attached to an active Place above and/or documents from any or all of the above places if one either can't remember where they were, or one finds the SharePoint search congenial

(since all Teams, Yammer and Outlook documents are effectively stored in SharePoint.

- To read published information that has been structured, curated and published there by a designated enterprise authority -- for instance about HR policy, Methodology learning and usage, etc.
- To create and publish the information as described above

Some Final Thoughts on Principles for Leading Enterprises Practicing Work Out Loud

- That there is content in exchanges (emails, text messages, meetings, calls, conversations) that has value beyond the moment and to more people than are part of the in-the-moment exchange
 - That outside of work virtually every working professional has materially changed how they communicate, converse, meet and exchange ideas and interests over the past 10 years
 - That the changes OUTSIDE of work can have a positive impact INSIDE the work environment
 - That those changes are impacting the speed with which information moves and impacting the very nature of we process and act on information
 - That what all of the people inside an enterprise 'know' is vastly larger than what the enterprise 'knows it knows'
 - That people are increasing used to working 'across' knowledge topics rather than 'down' (digest/magazine vs book) as a consequence digital collections of knowledge / news / information tend to be 'flatter' and allow rapid skimming rather than 'hierarchical' requiring a guided tour / dive.
 - That people are much more used to exchanging information in a loosely-defined and shifting 'network' of peers rather than sending/receiving through a 'chain of command'
 - That people are increasingly used to spending time in digital 'places' rather than just picking up a digital 'tool' to execute a task
-